mineral sector. Regular interaction with the State Governments is also organised in this regard.

Setting up pilot plants by Indian Bureau of Mines

2099. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of pilot plants set up by the Indian Bureau of Mines and the location thereof;

(b) whether some new pilot plants are proposed to be set up in 1997-98;

(c) whether any such pilot plant is proposed to be set up in Orissa;

(d) if so, the steps taken in this regard;

(e) the steps taken by Government for the effective functioning of the Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM); and

(f) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) Three pilot plants have been set up by the Indian Bureau of Mines for analysis and upgradation of low grade ores at Nagpur, Ajmer and Bangalore.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) and (f) The IBM functions as per the approved charter of functions through its Divisions and Regional Offices. For the effective functioning of the IBM, a very progressive Management Information System has been set up, which has the following elements:—

(i) Annual Action Plan, which lays down specific targets for different Divisions of the IBM;

(ii) Monitoring by the IBM Advisory Board;

(iii) Quarterly Review of the progress by the secretary (mines);

(iv) Periodic review and monitoring by the Controller General, IBM of the work carried out by the Zonal & Regional Offices; and

(v) Periodic workshops with the mine owners and meetings of the Mining Plan Grievance Committee.

Delete Limestone and Bauxite from the list of Scheduled Minerals

2100. SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN:
SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government approval is sought under the MMRD Act, 1957 for granting a schedule mineral under Schedule-I of the Act;

(b) whether the Government of Gujarat has represented to the Union Government to delete Limestone and Bauxite from the Schedule-I list of the MMRD Act, 1957;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the action taken by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) The proposal has been discussed in the meetings of the Committee constituted under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Mines) with the Secretaries of State Governments, Industry, Indian Bureau of Mines etc. as members to review the Mining Rules and procedures etc. The terms of reference of the Committee inter—alia include review of the existing laws and procedures governing regulation and development of minerals and to recommend steps to make them compatiable with the policy changes and

to suggtst steps to reduce delays in grant/ renewal of Prospecting Licenses/Mining Leases. The Committee is also to consider and suggest further delegation of powers to the State Governments regarding grant/renewal of prospecting Licences, Vimping Leases and measures to be taken to prevent illegal mining.

Exploration and development of minerals in North-Eastern Region

2101. DR. B. B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the task force set up by Government on exploration and development of minerals in the North-Eastern Region has submitted its report.

(b) if so, the main recommendations thereof; and

(c) the action taken by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The main recommendations of the Task Force are as under:—

(i) Creation of a separate Directorate of Geology & Mining (DGM) in States where it does not exist and suitably strengthening the existing Directorate including creation of field formations.

(ii) The DGM should work as a single window for entrepreneurs who want to set up mineral based industries.

(iii) The Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) to open office at Guwahati and to arrange for collection of mineral samples for testing at their laboratories free of cost.

(iv) The States which do not have their own Minor Mineral Concession Rules to formulate such Rules.

(v) Creation of a separate fund under the title "North Eastern Mineral Development Fund" (NEMDF) for, inter-alia, construction of link roads between mines sites and the plant sites and the nearest public roads, cost of preparation of pre-feasibility study and generation of environmental base line data for setting up mineral based industries and cost of transportation of bulk quantity of minerals for pilot plant scale testing by IBM.

(vi) Creation of a separate cell for financing mineral based industries in the North Easter Development Financial Corporation with similar facilities in other public sector banks and financial institutions operating in North Eastern States.

(vii) Provision of transport subsidy for ores as well as semi-processed minerals for transport outside North Eastern States as also for essential raw materials to be brought from outside for use in the processing of minerals of North-Eastern States.

(viii) Facility of on-the-job training to personnel engaged in mining and related activities especially below the level of Mining Engineer free of cost and where cost is involved, the same should be borne out of the fund available with North-Eastern Council and also out of the NEMDF.

(ix) Creation of faculty of Mining in the Central University at Tezpur and in the IIT Guwahati and introduction of courses on Management Studies in the Central University and North Eastern Hill University with provisions of reservation of certain seats for local indigenous) people.

(x) Introduction of 100 per cent tax exemption for investments or deposits (both principal and interest) with industries and developmental agencies in the North Eastern Region engaged in exploitation of minerals, power and other infrastructure with encouragemtnt to domestic private financial institutions with incentives for investment.